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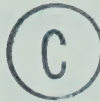
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RITUAL DEFENCE AGAINST NADA IN HEMINGWAY'S SHORT STORIES

by



HOWARD VERGIL OLSON

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Ritual Defence Against Nada in Hemingway's Short Stories" submitted by Howard Vergil Olson in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

While there is a prodigious amount of critical material dealing with Hemingway's fiction, one of the least explored areas to date is the nature of the anxiety experienced by most of his central characters. And even what criticism there is, while it recognizes the pervasive element of anxiety in Hemingway's work, tends to relate it to the author's specific fear of death. But nada, the Spanish word for "nothingness" which Hemingway himself used, seems more accurately to denote the kind of anxiety which virtually all of his central characters must come to terms with. This fear of "nothingness," unlike the fear of death, is more internal than external; it threatens not only one's physical self but also one's sense of selfhood, or self-identity, one's psychic wholeness; it threatens the individual ego with engulfment in an impersonal, disintegrating chaotic universe.

This thesis is an attempt to define the nature of the threat of nada, the effect it has upon Hemingway's protagonists, and the ritualized means of defence which they erect in striving to overcome this threat. It will concentrate on the short stories because they provide the germinal treatment of these dominant fictional concerns which Hemingway more fully enunciated in his novels.

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing is more real than nothing.

Samuel Beckett

Lionel Trilling, in an essay on Leo Tolstoi's novel Anna Karenina,¹ observes that Tolstoi's novel does not depict a world that we know or a reality that we can fully accept. Something has happened to modern man, and to the world which he inhabits, which has irreparably damaged his ability to respond fully to Tolstoi's vision. A new perspective, an altered sensibility which Henry James called the "imagination of disaster,"² has descended like a pall upon twentieth-century man. And while it may be true that Tolstoi's vision was myopic in its failure to acknowledge evil as a central factor in human experience, modern man with his new perspective, his "imagination of disaster," has somehow seen too much reality, and hence, he has lost his capacity to make an affirmation of life. Trilling, with his usual clarity, makes exactly this point in a brilliant comparison between the world view of Shakespeare and that of Kafka:

It may seem to a contemporary reader that, if we compare Shakespeare and Kafka, leaving aside the degree of genius each has, and considering both only as expositors of man's suffering and cosmic alienation, it is Kafka who makes the more intense and complete exposition. And, indeed, the judgment may be correct, exactly because for Kafka the sense of evil is not contradicted by the sense of personal identity. Shakespeare's world, quite as much as Kafka's, is that prison cell which Pascal says the world is, from which daily the inmates are led forth to die; Shakespeare no less than Kafka forces upon us the cruel irrationality of the conditions of human life, the tale told by an idiot, the puerile gods who torture us not for punishment but for sport; and no less

than Kafka, Shakespeare is revolted by the fetor of the prison of his world, nothing is more characteristic of him than his imagery of disgust. But in Shakespeare's cell the company is so much better than in Kafka's, the captains and kings and lovers and clowns of Shakespeare are alive and complete before they die. In Kafka, long before the sentence is executed, even long before the malign legal process is even instituted, something terrible has been done to the accused. We all know what that is--he has been stripped of all that is becoming to a man except his abstract humanity, which, like his skeleton, never is quite becoming to a man. He is without parents, home, wife, child, commitment, or appetite; he has no connection with power, beauty, love, wit, courage, loyalty, or fame, and the pride that may be taken in these. So that we may say that Kafka's knowledge of evil exists without the contradictory knowledge of the self in its health and validity, that Shakespeare's knowledge of evil exists with the contradiction in its fullest possible force.³

But the name of Hemingway is seldom linked to that of Kafka as yet another expositor of the kind of horrific vision which is at the center of Kafka's work. While few would deny the assertion that Hemingway's vision is fully cognizant of the existence of evil in the world, many would raise objections to the corollary assertion that Hemingway's vision does not possess "the contradictory knowledge of the self in its health and validity." For does not Hemingway describe the natural phenomenal world with a tender and precise recollection that we can only attribute to love? And are not those two famous fishing excursions, one to Burguete in Spain as recorded in The Sun Also Rises, and one in the brilliant short story "Big Two-Hearted River," both memorable affirmations attesting to the possibility of happiness, however transitory that happiness may be? The American critic Wright Morris is somewhat typical in his response to this side of Hemingway's fiction:

Only a man who had believed, with a child's purity of faith in some

haunting dream of life, in its vistas of promise, is capable of forging his disillusion into a work of art. It is love of life that Hemingway's judgment of life reveals. Between the lines of his prose, between the passage and the reader, there is often that far sound of running water, a pine-scented breeze that blows from a cleaner and finer world. It is this air that makes the sight of so many corpses bearable.⁴

But while we may hear this sound of running water and feel or smell the pine-scented breeze, we either read Hemingway's fiction superficially or delude ourselves if we take this as evidence of psychic wholeness. For throughout much of Hemingway's fiction we as readers are aware that the protagonists, and often the subsidiary characters as well, are pursued by a horror which, while it may seem to be somewhat abstract to the reader, takes on a terrifying reality to the protagonist whose very existence it threatens. Hemingway's early protagonists characteristically maintain a very deliberate hold over their consciousness, a hold which we come to realize is ultimately a repressive, but invariably an unsuccessful maneuver to assert their will over the surrounding chaos. Thus the whole of Hemingway's works appear to follow the pattern of a dialectical process in which the psychic problems arising from an antecedent action involving the protagonist results in a repressive defence mechanism which ultimately collapses and threatens to leave the protagonist vulnerable. The tension thus created is intensified by the protagonist's studied concern with concrete sensory experience. Robert Evans, in an otherwise vindictive and altogether wrong-headed essay on Hemingway, makes this point extremely well:

The crucial and distinctive action in Hemingway's fiction is directed inward; it is repressive, not expressive, and it functions primarily as a means for containing and making bearable emotion of a peculiarly destructive sort. To accomplish this, the action need not be violent and painful, though often it is. An enormous concentration on the trivial and routine--going fishing, having a drink--will do just as well. What matters is the total absorptive power of the action, its capacity for temporarily annihilating or insulating the attention. This accounts for the remarkably disturbing stillness of the surface of those stories in which "nothing seems to happen." It is the stillness of a powerful spring drawn to the breaking point, so that release or the slightest additional tension must equally result in violence; and the reader, sensing this perilous equilibrium in which all the resources of the protagonist are stretched to their limits, knows that disaster can be staved off for only so long, and that already time has nearly run out.⁵

But we have to delve deeper into the nature of Hemingway's and his character's fears than to say with Edmund Wilson that this retreat is simply a product of Hemingway's "self-drugging,"⁶ or with Robert Evans, that it constitutes a "moral holiday."⁷ In either case the language used seems to not-so-subtly suggest that Hemingway and his protagonists have chosen the somewhat cowardly path of retreat instead of remaining to conquer the foe. Both criticisms are correct only on the condition that, either the fear is a fear of social chaos as Hemingway and his characters experienced it during and after the Great War, in which case flight would constitute a kind of social nihilism, or, the fear is simply a fear of intellectual confrontation, in which case, the flight would constitute a kind of intellectual cowardice. But both criticisms are based on the supposition inherent in Western rational positivism that there is always an external and objectively verifi-

fiable relationship between fear and its object. And with special reference to Hemingway's flight from social involvement, his journeys to the bullring in Spain and to big-game hunting in Africa during the 1930's, the criticism falls considerably short of the truth. It is true that all of Hemingway's early fiction, whether it is geographically located in Europe or in America, does have as a backdrop the nightmarish cruelties of war and the consequent disintegration of the meaningfulness of traditional values and institutions. But a far greater threat, of which the social disintegration without is merely a prognostic prefiguration, is the threat of ultimate psychic chaos within. "It is a growing consciousness," says literary critic Robert Stephens, "that meaninglessness exists internally as well as externally, in the individual psyche as in the external world."⁸

We can easily perceive the tentative solution that Hemingway arrives at to cope with social meaninglessness as it is manifested in the characters in his early fiction. Jake Barnes is a spokesman for this attempt at pragmatic compromise: Perhaps as you went along you did learn something. I did not care what it was all about. All I wanted to know was how to live in it. Maybe if you found out how to live in it you learned from that what it was all about.⁹

But while this may be an effective kind of accommodation to a very real societal condition, a workable accommodation to the lurking threat of nothingness or nonbeing, which in the Heming-

way protagonist, is the very core of his character as a fictional entity, is much more difficult to achieve. "If [modern man]" says Jung, "turns away from the terrifying prospect of a blind world in which building and destroying successively tip the scale, and if he then turns his gaze inward upon the recesses of his own mind, he will discover a chaos and a darkness there which he would gladly ignore."¹⁰ The Hemingway protagonist is such a man, a man who, by the time we see Jake Barnes in The Sun Also Rises (chronologically later than A Farewell to Arms as a history of the protagonist if not as a published novel), has achieved a "separate peace,"¹¹ but is still wholly incapable of fixing a steady gaze inward.

Paul Tillich, in his book The Courage To Be, provides the invaluable and generally accepted existential distinction between fear and anxiety, a distinction which casts the Hemingway protagonist's dilemma in relief:

Anxiety and fear have the same ontological root but they are not the same in actuality Fear, as opposed to anxiety, has a definite object (as most authors agree) which can be faced, analyzed, attacked, endured. One can act upon it and in acting upon it participate in it--even if in the form of struggle. In this way one can take it into one's self-affirmation. Courage can meet every object of fear, because it is an object and makes participation possible.... One could say that as long as there is an object of fear, love, in the sense of participation, can conquer fear.

But this is not so with anxiety, because anxiety has no object, or rather, in a paradoxical phrase, its object is the negation of every object. Therefore participation, struggle and love with respect to it are impossible. He who is in anxiety is, insofar as it is merely anxiety, delivered to it

without help... It expresses itself in loss of direction, inadequate reactions The reason for this sometimes striking behavior is the lack of an object on which the subject . . . can concentrate. The only object is the threat itself, but not the source of the threat, because the source of the threat is "nothingness."¹²

And to return to Lionel Trilling's commentary on the works of Kafka, we may say that Hemingway's protagonists, like Kafka's, lack the firm sense of the self as a valid and genuine entity: they are "ontologically insecure,"¹³ to a point approaching functional psychosis.

Critical awareness of this emphasis in Hemingway's fiction has been recent, and at best only partial. In an early, and generally appreciative essay on Ernest Hemingway and his art, Edmund Wilson, in a probable allusion to Hemingway's remarkable ability to return to genuine artistic excellence after not infrequent literary lapses, commented that "the principle of the Bourdon gauge, which is used to measure the pressure of liquids, is that a tube which has been curved into a coil will tend to straighten out in proportion as the liquid inside it is subjected to an increasing pressure."¹⁴ But the truth of this Donne-like image has since been questioned by other critics, and the meaning of the image has been considerably altered. John Aldrige, in an essay entitled "Hemingway: The Etiquette of the Berserk," opens his paper with a criticism of Hemingway's last novel The Old Man and the Sea, which he sees as somewhat insipid and uninspired. The Old Man and the Sea, he feels, has

been written "as if there was nothing sufficiently strong within its subject to resist it at any point and provoke it into fully alert dramatic life."¹⁵ Essentially, Aldridge sees two distinctly different literary patterns in Hemingway's work: either the protagonist is a strongman type of figure who is pitted against insurmountable odds (Harry Morgan and Santiago are of this sort), or he is the psychically wounded hero whose precarious mental equilibrium is maintained only by adherence to a rigid code of conduct (the hero as exemplified by Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry). And for Aldridge, only the Hemingway works which have this later "formula," wherein the protagonist is the dramatic embodiment of this psychic tension, constitute the genuine, and incidentally, the successful Hemingway art. Aldridge elaborates:

In the best of the early Hemingway one always felt that the prose had been forced out under great pressure through a tight screen of opposing psychic tensions; and one read it with the same taut apprehensiveness, the same premonition of hugely impending catastrophe, as that with which it was written--quite as if one were picking one's way with the author through an uncleared minefield of language.¹⁶

Also, it must be noted that Aldridge dismisses For Whom the Bell Tolls on the ground that, like To Have and to Have Not and The Old Man and the Sea, it is a novel which is concerned with a physical and not a psychic conflict, that it embodies a struggle against a real, albeit an horrific enemy, and hence, that it differs from most of Hemingway's earlier works. Thus, if we accept Aldridge's criterion of excellence, we must conclude that

the only Hemingway works which really merit acknowledgement begin with the earlier short stories and, with the odd exception, culminate with the completion of his second novel, A Farewell to Arms.

Aldridge not only does not accept Edmund Wilson's use of the Bourdon gauge image to suggest Hemingway's recuperative artistic power, he gives it a somewhat grotesque meaning of his own:

The tube now, we might say, has long since withstood the maximum pressure it was made to bear and has at last straightened out completely and for good. The tense young man in dramatic flight from the black horror of trauma has faded into the exhausted old man relaxed in an attitude of crucifixion and dreaming of the clear daylight and lions playing on the African coast.¹⁷

For Aldridge then, Hemingway's art is that fiction only which represents the psychic nightmare, that abstract horror which is at the heart of many of Hemingway's best short stories, and which is the all-pervasive nada that makes insomniacs of Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry in the two early novels. And whether Aldridge is correct in his criticism of Hemingway's work as a whole, he has grasped the essential quality of Hemingway's vision: the psychic insecurity of modern man, grappling desperately with an inner anxiety he cannot fully comprehend or control.

But we must note the extent to which Aldridge has deepened and enlarged earlier criticism of Hemingway's art. The gamut of interpretations begins with the naive, and to our mind wrong-headed, observation of Wyndham Lewis, that Hemingway's art is "an art of the surface,"¹⁸ a one-dimensional naturalism; and extends to the more perceptive critics who were able to discern recurring

symbolic patterns in his work. It is perhaps to Malcolm Cowley more than to any other critic that we owe the emergence of our understanding of Hemingway as a symbolist writer. As his symbolism came to be understood, the nervous, nightmarish qualities which it revealed, showed Hemingway's kinship, not solely to the realistic tradition of Dreiser, but to the nineteenth-century American writers, Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville, "the haunted and nocturnal writers, the men who dealt in images that were symbols of an inner world." ¹⁹ Cowley points out the sense of horror which pervades much of Hemingway's writing. Whether the hero in Hemingway's short stories and novels is in the midst of violence and death, or whether that violence and death is a part of his past experience, it is the pervasive evil which always invades his world by day, and which comes back to prevent him from sleeping at night. And it is precisely this quality which provides the dramatic tension lurking beneath the ostensibly smooth surface of many of the stories and novels in which nothing appears to happen.

But although it was Cowley, and somewhat later Carlos Baker, who helped to clarify much of Hemingway's general symbolic approach to writing, it was left to a trio of brilliant critics, led by Frederick J. Hoffman, and followed quickly by Philip Young and John Aldridge, to perceive and elaborate the underlying pattern operant throughout Hemingway's fiction. In his now-classic study which he called The Twenties, Hoffman examines the tremend-

ous shock suffered by the modern Western positivistic ethos as a direct result of World War I. But as Hoffman saw it, the reason for the alteration in sensibility resulted from the profound loss of traditional values in a world suddenly thrown awry by violence. And beyond the general alteration in perspective is the much more real alteration in individual perspective caused by what Hoffman calls the "symbolic injury." Hoffman makes this occurrence concrete in terms of its artistic significance:

One of the most radical changes in modern literary sensibility can be described as the symbolic injury. The circumstances of such an injury are almost invariably violent, and the violence, while not entirely unexpected, comes as a surprise, as a shock, to the person injured But the accident is the result not of mere chance but of impersonal misfortune impersonally caused. The injury, when it comes, is a form of death whether the victim survives it or not.²⁰

And it is perhaps needless to dwell on the fact that Hemingway suffered just such an injury, which he himself described to Malcolm Cowley as a kind of death. The injury or wound occurred when Hemingway was struck by a mortar shell on July 8, 1918:

I died then, . . . I felt my soul or something coming right out of my body, like you'd pull a silk handkerchief out of a pocket by one corner. It flew around and then came back and went in again and I wasn't dead anymore!²¹

Whether or not this description of Hemingway's injury is correct, he did apparently undergo a kind of death and a subsequent re-birth which radically altered his own perspective on life, and which Hoffman claimed, radically altered the perspective of Hemingway's protagonists.

The chief consequences of the physical injury, as Hoffman perceives them, are the huge psychic shock which accompanies it and which completely separates the injured man from the rest of society, and the extreme difficulty which he has in adjusting himself to society thereafter. Apart from the difficulty which the psychically injured man has in finding a meaningful pattern of life for himself, he may find that the shock has, according to Hoffman, "upset his confidence in the past--in his own past and the social past of which he has been a part."²² And although Hoffman sees the war memories epitomized in the "unreasonable wound" as an influential element in Hemingway's earliest book of short stories, In Our Time, he goes beyond this work to examine, first, A Farewell to Arms as a fictional elaboration of Hemingway's own physical and psychic wound, and second, The Sun Also Rises as a documentation of the results of that wound. Hoffman concludes his study of Hemingway's early fiction with the suggestion that Hemingway, in his non-fictional work of 1932, Death in the Afternoon, had finally achieved a solution to his psychic injury, a "perfect palliative to the bewilderment and terror felt by the victims of the unreasonable wound,"²³ insofar as the bullfighter, as artist, is able to meet the danger of an encounter with death, and, through his own resources, control it. Hoffman's entire approach then, is oriented towards Hemingway's own specific war injury, the "symbolic wound," a simulated

death which acts as the motive force for all of his fiction.

If Hoffman's study was able to discern a pattern extending beyond any one work, it was left to Philip Young, in his classic study, simply called Ernest Hemingway, to fully elaborate an all-inclusive pattern which would bring in all of Hemingway's fiction. In noting that Hemingway has a tendency to return again and again to the central themes with which he is concerned, Young saw the total body of Hemingway's fiction as a kind of continuum, with each work helping to clarify and explicate the others. And in another critical insight, he pointed out that the Nick Adams of Hemingway's earliest group of related short stories, In Our Time, ostensibly a kind of mask for Hemingway himself, is apparently the same character with a changed name in the bulk of the later stories and novels. All of the characters seem to share a common history in the earlier experiences of Nick Adams, and, in that sense, all of them are, in effect, the same character placed under different circumstances.

But, whereas Hoffman had simply seen Hemingway's early fiction as the consequence of the one central war wound which Hemingway himself received, Young saw Hemingway's early life as a continual process of being psychically wounded, and his fiction as an elaboration of that process. The entire pattern of movement is from innocence to experience, and ultimately, to injury or symbolic death and consequent separation. And from

this point of view, much of the early work is in the nature of a retrospective psychiatric documentation of a man suffering from the severe mental anguish of witnessing an excess of sickening violence. Although the boyhood life of Nick Adams in northern Michigan contained an ample abundance of experience to cripple a sensitive boy, Young feels that it is the war experience which completes the process. If Nick is already well on the way to becoming a casualty, the war wound, which Hoffman intimated was almost the sole factor in Hemingway's creative process, is seen by Young as simply something which "culminates, climaxes and epitomizes the wounds he has been getting as a growing boy."²⁴ But while Hoffman merely quotes Sigmund Freud's Beyond the Pleasure Principle to validate the compulsive-repetitive nature of the "unreasonable wound," which knits Hemingway's early fiction to the process of re-actualizing the wound and the results of it, Young applies this approach to the whole body of Hemingway's fiction. In referring to the works which were written after the bulk of the early short stories, Young feels that they do no less than "represent [the] wounded hero and the process of his injuring, disillusionment and break with respectability."²⁵

If one comes to the ostensibly valid conclusion that Young's work is no more than an elaboration, with considerable modification, of Frederick Hoffman's shorter and earlier study (and Young does not admit to this), we find that his perception and illumi-

nation of the underlying code or standard of behavior which the Hemingway protagonists seek to enlist as a protective barrier against a world thrown into moral chaos is his critical insight most relevant to this study. Stoic fortitude, a philosophy of "hold tight," despite impotence to alter the existing situation, is the essential quality of the code. Young, using Hemingway's own phrase from the bullring, calls it "a grace under pressure:"

It is made of the controls of honor and courage which in a life of tension and pain make a man a man and distinguish him from the people who follow random impulses, let down their hair, and are generally messy, perhaps cowardly, and without inviolable rules for how to live holding tight.²⁶

To live at all, apparently, requires that the protagonist must virtually build his life around the many "thou shalt nots" of the Hemingway code. And it is this "code hero,"²⁷ who, although he is not always moral in the orthodox sense of the word, is nonetheless the man who has learned how to live with the world, and who serves as an illustration of successful accommodation to an implacably indifferent world. This code then, according to Philip Young, is a kind of ritualistic response of the Hemingway protagonist to a hostile world.

Malcolm Cowley, writing somewhat earlier than Young, was also sensitive to the ritualistic, or otherwise defensive behavior of the Hemingway protagonists. In his essay entitled "Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway," Cowley, although he did not explicitly refer to the Hemingway protagonist's behavior as a code,

noted the very ritualistic manner in which Nick Adams performs virtually all of the actions in which he is involved in the story "Big Two-Hearted River." He then goes on to observe that much of Hemingway's fiction could be characterized by the ritually oriented behavior of the central character:

There is something of the same [animistic] atmosphere in Hemingway's work. His heroes live in a world that is like a hostile forest full of unseen dangers, not to mention the nightmares that haunt their sleep. Death spies on them from behind every tree. Their only chance of safety lies in the faithful observance of customs they invent for themselves.²⁸

Cowley's acute insight into the nature of Hemingway's fictional characters is right on mark, and lacks only the specific elaboration of the reasons for such ritualistic behavior, and the codification of it in a more substantial form. Philip Young's study sought to supply both:

The hero . . . [was] sensitive, masculine, impressionable, honest, out-of-doors--a boy then a man who had come up against violence and evil and been wounded by them. The manhood he had attained was thus complicated and insecure, but he was learning a code with which he might maneuver, though crippled, and he was practicing the rites which might exorcise the terrors born of the events that crippled him.²⁹

But while Young is cognizant of the Hemingway protagonist's means of defence, the ritualized behavior which he calls a "code," Young, like Hoffman, in his admittedly Freudian approach, tends to tie this code firmly to the concrete reality of the physical wound and its counterpart the psychic injury or symbolic death. More than this, Young ties the code to the very concrete fear of recurrence of the injury, in fact, of potential death.

But as we pointed out somewhat earlier in this introduction, John Aldridge feels, and with considerable justification, that the deep and horrific fear manifested by some of Hemingway's protagonists results from a much more abstract or less tangible source than that of Hemingway's obsessive preoccupation with death as Hoffman and Young would have it. This is not to say that Aldridge ignores the significance of Hemingway's physical and psychic trauma, but simply that he tends to interpret its continuing significance in a somewhat broader manner. Like Malcolm Cowley, Aldridge recognizes some of the wholly unconscious elements in Hemingway's art, its "peculiarly instinctive nature."³⁰ And taking Hemingway's oft-quoted passage on the description of his injury at Fossalta di Piave in 1918, to the effect that when he was struck he felt that he had died, that he "felt his soul or something coming right out of his body, like you'd pull a silk handkerchief out of a pocket by one corner," and then return to his body and that he was alive again, Aldridge sees in this unique description another markedly primitive quality, what Carl Jung calls the "perils of the soul." Aldridge very convincingly quotes from Jung's work Psychology and Religion to demonstrate the primitive concern with maintaining consciousness, that is, the fear of losing the soul and numerous rituals followed to prevent it:

Consciousness must have been a very precarious thing in its beginnings. In relatively primitive societies we can still observe how easily consciousness is lost. One of the "perils of the soul" is, for instance, the loss of a soul. This is a case of a part

of the psyche becoming unconscious again. Another example is the amok condition, the equivalent of the berserk condition in the Germanic saga. This is a more or less complete trance, often accompanied by devastating social effects. Even an ordinary emotion can cause a considerable loss of consciousness. Primitives therefore cherish elaborate forms of politeness, speaking with a hushed voice, laying down their weapons, crouching, bowing the head, showing the palms The life of the primitive is filled with constant regard for the ever lurking possibility of psychical dangers, and the attempts and procedures employed to diminish the risks are very numerous.³¹

While Aldridge's brief essay does not explore the many complex similarities between the actions of some of Hemingway's protagonists and the protective actions of primitives, he has given considerably more meaning to the so-called code by which most of Hemingway's characters manage to live. "The code of his heroes," says Aldridge, "is clearly the symbolic construction of a psychic barricade erected against one of the primary perils of his soul--the loss of consciousness leading to a lawless, amok, or berserk condition."³² We can safely say that Aldridge is correct in perceiving that the threat of nothingness is not merely a threat of potential death, as Hoffman and Young have suggested, but his cursory glance at The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell To Arms neither elaborates this threat as it appears in the short stories, nor does it really demonstrate the specific means whereby it is dealt with. All of Hemingway's early characters are people who fear the night, all of them people who strive assiduously to blot out certain memories of past experience. His protagonists practice a firm, indeed a deliberately stern, consciousness of mind. For

Hemingway, it would appear, life is an either/or condition, with unconsciousness signifying nothingness or nonbeing. That Hemingway and his character Frederic Henry describe their violent injury, in fact, their temporary death, as a loss of soul, and their return to life as a subsequent return of the soul, is completely meaningful insofar as we realize that, for Hemingway, the soul means consciousness. The trauma of the wound brings the ultimate realization that, as Robert Stephens says, "his soul as a conscious existence is his bulwark against the terrors of his dark and secret existence."³³

But a closer examination of Hemingway's works reveals that, not only is consciousness equated with ontic reality and unconsciousness with nonbeing, but in fact, the meaning of consciousness is broadened out to suggest all forms of rational control, and that of unconsciousness to a corresponding loss of such control. In observing the tremendous ethical value which Hemingway attaches to such heightened consciousness or control, the "grace under pressure" which constitutes the ideal which all of Hemingway's protagonists strive to attain, we are led to an acute awareness of the corollary of such a normative value, the foreboding and even horrific nature of the enemy, the threat of nothingness or nonbeing which Hemingway broadly covers with the use of the more connotative Spanish word for nothing or nothingness, nada.

This threat of nada, and some of the various means of defence which the Hemingway protagonist uses to combat it, will be

the substance of the chapters which follow. While this threat and the attempt to come to terms with it is a central concern of much of Hemingway's early fiction, this study will concentrate upon its elaboration in a selection of the short stories. Also, while there will be considerable emphasis upon ritualistic elements in Hemingway's fiction, our intent is not merely to catalog these elements. Rather, we intend to show the broader general significance of ritual as it forms the essence of the persona or mask created as a defence against nada.

CHAPTER I

Confrontation With The Enemy

Although Hemingway initially published a slim volume entitled Three Stories and Ten Poems in 1923 (the stories were incorporated into later publications), his first significant work, which he called In Our Time, was published in 1925. This connected group of short stories whose title, as Philip Young observes, is probably a "sardonic allusion to that phrase from the Book of Common Prayer: Give peace in our time, O Lord,"¹ is a book concerned, not with peace, but with the initiation of a sensitive young boy, Nick Adams, into the evil and violence of the world. This work is not unlike a novel in that the entire volume of short stories has only one central character, Nick Adams, although he is physically absent, or present under another name, in a few of the stories. In Our Time is also somewhat like a novel in that, while the work consists of fourteen separate stories (one is in two parts), they are prefixed with chapter numbers indicating that they are to be read as a part of a whole. Another extremely effective innovation which Hemingway brought to this volume of short stories is the insertion of brief but cogent inter-chapters, usually describing scenes of violence in the war. Throughout the book, these inter-chapters weave a pattern of death and disorder, and always they are short and cryptic, lacking any editorial comment whatever.

They are themselves, in fact, the editorial comment on the maturation stories of the boy, and they serve to throw into sharp focus the gradual impingement of violence, death and evil upon the innocence of the growing boy.

In Our Time opens with an apparently unconnected 'Introduction by the Author' which describes the ghastly situation at the quai at Smyrna in the Greco-Turkish conflict, where women cling desperately to their dead babies, and the unneeded pack mules are killed by driving them into the shallow water of the bay and then breaking their forelegs so that they will drown. This introduction is written in the first-person, and the narrator notes that the harbor "had plenty of nice things floating around in it," and "I got so I dreamed about things."² And although In Our Time is like a maturation novel, the degree of brutality, perversion, and sterility which the young boy encounters gives it the effect of a retrospective psychiatric documentation of someone suffering from severe mental anguish caused by an excess of such encounters.

The opening story of In Our Time, entitled "Indian Camp," is also the beginning of a fairly well-organized chronological history of Nick Adams. We see him here, in the first story, as a very young boy, and he ages as the stories progress. "Indian Camp" relates an incident in the life of Nick's doctor-father, who, with Nick as a compelled spectator, delivers the child of an Indian woman by Caesarian with the use of only a jackknife

and a piece of gut fishing leader. Meanwhile, the Indian woman's husband, who has been stoically bearing his wife's screams in the bunk above her, can no longer be a witness to such pain and commits suicide by cutting his throat with a straight razor. Birth, violence, and death are all brought within the circle of the old Indian woman's lamp for young Nick to see, at a tender age long before he is really capable of bearing a psychic shock of this kind. "Indian Camp" derives its powerful effect from what will become, in most of Hemingway's later fiction, a telling device, the juxtaposition of the central figures in the story in such a manner that they highlight the particular quality that Hemingway wants us to be aware of in the protagonist. The callousness of Nick's father is exemplified when, after Nick asks him to give the Indian woman something to stop her screaming, he says that "her screams are not important."³ This callousness is hardly admirable in this instance. To Nick's father's initial insistence that Nick come to such an ordeal (the primitive nature of which he could not help but have anticipated) is added his apparent sense of pride in performing such an operation, summed up in his boast that "that's one for the medical journal."⁴ The subsequent discovery of the suicide of the child's father, which suggests his affinity with Nick in their sensitivity to the suffering of others, seems a damning indictment of Nick's father's indifference to human suffering. Although such a position may be an unduly harsh criticism of the doctor in the light of Heming-

way's own apparent stoicism as we find it in much of the later work, the father's objectivity, feigned or otherwise, tends to make us even more aware of the sensitivity of Nick. Nick's uncle, too, by passing out cigars, and cursing the squaw when she bites him, provides another foil in cynicism to the sensitivity of the boy, who turns his head because of the painful nature of the sight before him.

But we must look a bit more closely at this initial story to see just how germane in the overall pattern of Hemingway's fiction it is. For not only does this story set up a kind of teacher-student relationship, between Nick and his father in this case (that is, between innocence and experience), but it shows Nick in a process of inquiry, analysis, and finally, rejection, which, with some variations, will be a pattern which will ultimately lead him to formulate a ritualistic code for dealing with the truth gathered from these learning experiences. The brief exchange between father and son at the close of the story is illustrative of this process:

"Why did he [the Indian father] kill himself, Daddy?"

"I don't know, Nick. He couldn't stand things, I guess."

.....
 "Is dying hard, Daddy?"

"No, I think it's pretty easy, Nick. It all depends."

They were seated in the boat, Nick in the stern, his father rowing. The sun was coming up over the hills. A bass jumped, making a circle in the water. Nick trailed his hand in the water. It felt warm in the sharp chill of the morning.

In the early morning on the lake sitting in the stern of the boat with his father rowing, he felt quite sure that he would never die.⁵

The boat comes out of the dark chaos of pain and death, suffered at night, into the crisp, clear light of day, and little Nick, now aware of the warmth of his hand, his life, in the cold water, which suggest dissolution and loss of being, decides that he will shut this painful experience out of his own life somehow.

Although Nick Adams has still to undergo the catastrophe of his war wound, the central fact in his response to the situation he encounters in "Indian Camp" is a very early immature attempt to assert his will in the face of the disturbing reality of nothingness or nada. While at this stage, with his father still rowing the boat, that is, directing his life, Nick's response is little more than wishful thinking, this response to impinging reality, as we shall see, gradually becomes more complex or sophisticated as Nick himself matures.

The subjects with which several of the following stories in In Our Time are concerned, while they do not appear to be directly relevant to Nick's growing sense of the threat of non-being, are nevertheless valuable in that they offer Nick several alternatives in the way he can deal with certain undesirable aspects of reality. In "The Doctor and The Doctor's Wife," the doctor realizes that his Indian laborer, who owes him a considerable sum of money, is in effect trying to pick a fight with his employer so that he may avoid working off his debt. When confronted with this knowledge, the doctor's wife refuses to accept it as a plausible reason for the Indian's behavior. Her response,

"Dear, I don't think, I really don't think that any one would really do a thing like that,"⁶ is indicative of her refusal to acknowledge the existence of evil in the world. In this story, Nick chooses the way of his father in confronting the world on its own terms, leaving the escapist response of his mother, signified by her retreat to the darkened room where her Bible and her copy of Science and Health provide her with a myopic accommodation with the world. But the fact that Nick takes the way of his father at this point does not mean that this will be his permanent reaction to the impingement of evil upon his world. We must keep this in mind as we follow the development of the protagonist through Hemingway's fiction.

The next two stories in In Our Time, "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow" again offer Nick an alternate choice between a domestic female world, the "fat married look"⁷ that his friend Bill warns him about, or the male world of care-free irresponsibility. While Nick opts for the latter, his decision is contingent upon the false supposition that he can always change his mind about anything he chooses to, that, as he puts it, "there was not anything that was irrevocable There was always a way out."⁸ Not unlike the earlier Nick Adams of "Indian Camp," the protagonist here demonstrates a belief in the power of his own will to alter the circumstances of his fate. While we can see that the young boy has still not found the

ritualized means of dealing with painful situations that is evident in some of the later stories of In Our Time, two significant features of Nick's behavior as we observe it in this story anticipate the process of ritualization. First we see Nick using alcohol to soothe the hurt feelings which have come with his decision to sever his relationship with Marjorie. But what is really significant about his use of alcohol in this instance is the fact that, while under its influence, he achieves a kind of schizophrenic personality split which results in the projection of an artificial false mask that serves as a protective barricade against possible injury from the implosive threat of nada. The mask takes on a concrete reality when Nick stands before a mirror during his drinking episode in "The Three-Day Blow:"

On his way back to the living room he passed a mirror in the dining room and looked in it. His face looked strange. He smiled at the face in the mirror and it grinned back at him. He winked at it and went on. It was not his face but it didn't make any difference.⁹

This projection of a false image to bear the brunt of painful contact with the world, while it is here used as simply a device to mitigate the pain caused by the break-up of an adolescent love affair, will later become part of an elaborate ritualistic process to come to terms with the horrific threat of nonbeing. But we must note, too, that in this brief story the projection of the self out of the somewhat painful circumstances is not wholly successful: the projected mask of carefree irresponsibility induced by alcohol has not fully obliterated the true self, and it con-

tinues to exist essentially unchanged by the use of alcohol. Despite his friend Bill's words of encouragement to the effect that marriage would ruin him, a part of him is completely outside of the immediate situation, meditating on past events:

Nick said nothing. The liquor had all died out of him and left him alone. Bill wasn't there. He wasn't sitting in front of the fire or going fishing tomorrow with Bill and his dad or anything. He wasn't drunk. It was all gone. All he knew was that he had once had Marjorie and that he had lost her. She was gone and he had sent her away. That was all that mattered. He might never see her again. Probably he never would. It was all gone, finished.¹⁰

Nick's reaction to this ambivalent split in his personality is immediate when he says, "Let's have another drink."¹¹ He decides to sustain the false self which alcohol has helped to create. This apparent schizoid behavior must be examined in more detail.

Throughout this study we have avoided the use of the word "hero" to allude to Nick Adams or to characters with other names who assume his role. Even the term "protagonist," which we have used up to this point, is somewhat ambiguous, in that the character which we have been calling by that name is rarely the actively dominant character in any given work. It is this passive, spectatorial role of Nick Adams and his later counterparts which led Philip Young to formulate the distinction between what he calls the "code hero" and the "Hemingway hero,"¹² or what Earl Rovit calls the "tutor" and the "tyro"¹³ respectively. What this distinction does is to show that within a considerable number of works there exists, not only the passive spectator or "Hemingway

hero," but another character who embodies and acts out all the virtues which Hemingway himself must surely have seen as necessary for a successful accommodation to life. The "Hemingway hero," usually Nick Adams, benefits from a kind of student-teacher relationship with the "code hero," a man who, in exhibiting a firm sense of inner certainty, a "grace under pressure," demonstrates the possibility of coping with the exigencies of life. The behavior pattern of the "code hero" or "tutor" is natural, an expression of his own being and is not a mask of courage or humility or any other virtue.

To fully comprehend the complex relationship which exists between what we shall hereafter refer to as the "tutor" and the "tyro," we should point out that it is based upon a distinction between on the one hand, psychic wholeness (Trilling's Shakespearean character) and on the other, psychic uncertainty (Trilling's Kafkaesque character), or what R. D. Laing calls "ontological security" and "ontological insecurity." The man who is ontologically secure Laing says,

. . . may experience his own being as real, alive, whole; as differentiated from the rest of the world in ordinary circumstances so clearly that his identity and autonomy are never in question; as a continuum in time; as having an inner consistency, substantiality, genuineness, and worth; as spatially co-extensive with the body; and, usually, as having begun in or around birth and liable to extinction with death. He thus has a firm core of ontological security.¹⁴

We see immediately in Laing's ontologically secure man, Nick's father as we have observed him in "Indian Camp" and "The Doctor

and the Doctor's Wife." Nick's father is the "tutor" who, despite his awareness of the real nature of existence, is still wholly capable of self-affirmation. In both stories he confronts the reality of pain and evil in the world and asserts his will to mitigate their effects. In direct opposition to this kind of self-affirming character is what Laing calls the ontologically insecure individual:

The individual in the ordinary circumstances of living may feel more unreal than real; in a literal sense, more dead than alive; precariously differentiated from the rest of the world, so that his identity and autonomy are always in question. He may lack the experience of his own temporal continuity. He may not possess an over-riding sense of personal consistency or cohesiveness. He may feel more insubstantial than substantial, and unable to assume that the stuff he is made of is genuine, good, valuable. And he may feel his self partially divorced from his body.¹⁵

The sort of individual described by Laing is not unlike the character Nick Adams in the short story "The Three-Day Blow," and most of the fiction in which he appears subsequent to that story. Before elaborating upon this point, we must make one more significant observation with regard to the character relationships found in Hemingway's fiction.

The distinctions thus far dealt with are only really meaningful for the purposes of this study insofar as they serve to illumine the kind of defence embodied in them. For the "tyro", the passive spectator whom we have come to know as Nick Adams, is what we may call an ontologically insecure man, who, in striving to protect his very vulnerable and uncertain real self, emulates

the qualities he sees in the "tutor," the ontologically secure man. But while we feel that the behavior of the "tutor" is an expression of his true self, the emulation of this behavior pattern practiced by the "tyro" is not really an expression of his own genuine or real being, and hence manifests itself in the form of the forced, often ritualized conduct we know as the code. In effect, then, we may witness three characters present in this relationship under discussion insofar as we understand that the "tyro," Nick Adams, or one of his later counterparts, is a fragmented, dual personality. The third character in this trio is, of course, the "tutor", present in only some of the fiction. Most of the time we are witness to only one side of the "tyro's" personality, the projected mask created to bear the harsh demands of the encounter with reality.

To briefly return to "The Three-Day Blow," we can see Nick in this early short story as the "tyro" whose unity of being, when confronted with the exigencies of life, begins to fragment. Ontological insecurity is apparent in Nick's personality in that he does "not possess an over-riding sense of personal consistency or cohesiveness," and, confronted with a fairly insignificant experience, his apparent unity of being disappears and something not unlike a schizoid fragmentation of his personality occurs. In "The Three-Day Blow," the alcohol-induced schizoid fragmentation has resulted in the creation of a mask or projected false self, albeit this new personality lacks sophistication and the ritual-

istic qualities which it attains when it becomes a well-defined code of behavior. As later analysis will show, this projected mask will become so fully elaborated as to, in effect, present to us a totally unique entity, a fully rounded character. Also, as we shall see, this false self, the protective shield against impinging reality, will become increasingly ritualistic in the subsequent stories. The fact that the "tyro" that we witness moving through Hemingway's fiction is only a projected part, however complete as a character he may appear to be, of what might be likened to a schizoid condition, is attested to not only by the severity with which it is sustained, but by its not infrequent failure to fulfill its intended function of preventing painful experience from harming the other part of the personality, the true self.

R. D. Laing in his brilliant existential analysis of schizoid behavior entitled The Divided Self deals with the protective function of schizophrenic behavior in similar terms. While Laing refers to what we have been calling the true self as the "inner self," and to the false-self as the "false-self system", his analysis will help to substantiate what we have been discussing at this point:

The 'inner self' is occupied in phantasy and in observation. It observes the processes of perception and action. Experience does not impinge (or at any rate this is the intention) directly on this self, and the individual's acts are not self-expressions. Direct relationships with the world are the province of a false-self system Every man is involved personally in whether or to what extent he is being 'true to his true nature'

The false-self system to be described here exists as the complement of an 'inner' self which is occupied in maintaining its identity and freedom by being transcendent, unembodied, and thus never to be grasped, pinpointed, trapped, possessed. Its aim is to be pure subject, without any objective existence. Thus, except in certain possible safe moments the individual seeks to regard the whole of his objective existence as the expression of a false self. Of course, . . . if a man is not two-dimensional, having a two-dimensional identity established by a conjunction of identity-for-others, and identity-for-oneself, if he does not exist objectively as well as subjectively, but has only a subjective identity, an identity-for-himself, he cannot be real.¹⁶

Hence, if we relate back to the ambivalent nature of the "tyro," we can see that the young innocent, Nick Adams, in seeking to transcend the painful human condition, has begun a pattern of response to that condition which appears increasingly schizophrenic in some of its manifestations. While we see the creation of this false-self system in the short story "The Three-Day Blow," it is not a temporary defensive response created to alleviate momentary pain in one specific situation, but rather a total, and, in Nick Adams' case, a more or less permanent ontological buttress arising spontaneously out of a perilously uncertain personality structure. For the reader or the fictional observer, the one part of Nick, the inner self, only takes on a reality when the false-self system breaks down or threatens to break down under severe emotional stress. The pre-schizoid Nick Adams, unable to fully accept the contingency of existence, the threat of nonbeing, creates a dual self, one part of which accepts or complies with ontological contingency, while the other part strives to transcend it. "The basic split in the schizo-

phrenic's being," as Laing says, is along the line of cleavage between his outward compliance and his inner withholding of compliance."¹⁷ The young Nick Adams in "Indian Camp," who felt "that he would never die,"¹⁸ has to some extent withheld his compliance to the reality of ontological contingency, albeit the result has been the initiation of a process leading to the total division of his being.

Before moving on to the next chapter where we will meet with the post-war Nick, replete with a fully elaborated false-self system, we should mention perhaps, that there is a group of short stories which deal with a pre-war adolescent Nick, separated from the security afforded by parental guidance. In these stories, Nick undergoes an education through a series of direct confrontations with the sordid world of prize-fight brutality ("The Battler" and "Fifty Grand"), prostitution and sexual perversion ("The Light of the World" and "The Battler"), and violence in the form of gangsterism ("The Killers," "Fifty Grand," and "My Old Man"). What we must observe about Nick or his fictional counterpart in these stories is the fact that there is rarely a response to a disturbing situation in an active positive manner. Rather, he appears as an almost impartial observer who seems to casually record other character's responses to unsettling experiences. The various people whom Nick as the "tyro" witnesses responding to the exigencies of the human condition are tutors only in the limited sense that they show him possible alternate responses which he must

ultimately reject. The genuine "tutor" asserts his will out of a firm sense of ontological security, basing his actions upon a code which is both meaningful and consistent.

Perhaps "The Battler" serves as the most representative example of this particular educative period in Nick's life. Like the earlier story "Indian Camp," this story takes place in darkness, with the light of the fire revealing to Nick the reality of a world which brutalizes and mocks the cultural values that he has learned. Seated by the fire listening to the boasts of the punch-drunk little boxer as to the degree of punishment that he could take, and surrounded by only the darkened swamp, Nick feels the ominous threat of impinging chaos. This movement into the swamp, of course, also seems to objectify Nick's movement deeper into the interior anarchy of his own being. At the heart of the swamp he is confronted with the threat of nada, represented here by the "crazy", dangerously irrational punch-drunk fighter. It is significant that Nick, when challenged by the boxer, Ad Francis, is completely incapable of asserting his own will upon the situation:

Ad stood up.

"I'll tell you, you yellow-livered Chicago bastard. You're going to get your can knocked off. Do you get that?"

Nick stepped back. The little man came toward him slowly, stepping flat-footed forward, his left foot stepping forward, his right dragging up to it.

"Hit me," he moved his head. "Try and hit me."

"I don't want to hit you."

"You won't get out of it that way. You're going to take a beating, see? Come on and lead at me."

"Cut it out," Nick said.
 "All right, then, you bastard."¹⁹

If Nick fails to assert his will in this situation, Bugs, the boxer's homosexual Negro friend, moves quickly to control the situation by gently tapping the fighter across the base of the skull with a blackjack. In a sense Nick rejects the Negro's solution to this confrontation when, in replying to Bug's comment that he hit his friend so that Nick would not hurt him, he says, "You hurt him yourself."²⁰ The doctrine that violence must be met with violence is not yet acceptable to the young boy.

"The Battler," an early story published in 1925 as Chapter V of In Our Time, was followed two years later by Hemingway's well known story "The Killers," published in Men Without Women in 1927. In "The Killers" Nick is again confronted with violence, in this case gangsterism. Two paid assassins, aware that an ex-boxer Ole Andreson frequents a local cafe, enter the cafe, bind and gag Nick and the cook, and await his arrival. When Ole Andreson fails to arrive, the assassins leave and Nick is released by the cafe-owner. In contrast to the total passivity of Nick in "The Battler," we find that in this story there is an ambivalent response to irrational forces, the threat of nada. While Nick's initial response to this threat is assertive (he tries to warn Ole Andreson of the presence of the assassins), his ultimate response is to retreat from a situation he finds horrifying, or, in his own

words, "awful." ²¹ It is not merely the violence which Nick feels is "awful," but also the ex-boxer's failure to act in any positive way to counteract that violence. The dialogue between Nick and Ole Andreson demonstrates this resigned acceptance:

Nick looked at the big man lying on the bed.

"Don't you want me to go and see the police?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "That wouldn't do any good."

"Isn't there something I could do?"

"No. There ain't anything to do."

"Maybe it was just a bluff."

"No. It ain't just a bluff."

Ole Andreson rolled over toward the wall.

"The only thing is," he said, talking toward the wall, "I just can't make up my mind to go out. I been in here all day."

"Couldn't you get out of town?"

"No," Ole Andreson said. "I'm through with all that running around."

He looked at the wall.

"There ain't anything to do now."²²

After Nick leaves Ole, "with all his clothes on, lying on the bed looking at the wall,"²³ he tells George, the cafe-owner, that he intends to leave town because the thought of the ex-boxer "waiting in the room and knowing he's going to get it . . . [is] too damned awful."²⁴ Neither the cook's attitude, summarized by his comment "I don't even listen to it,"²⁵ nor George's advice that Nick "better not think about it,"²⁶ is any more viable as a solution to the problem of evil in the world than Ole Andreson's passive acceptance of death. Whereas Nick, in "The Battler," has rejected violence as a means of grappling with the threat of nada, he is, in "The Killers," apparently equally discontented with its corollary, the passive acceptance of evil in the world.

In the stories dealt with thus far, nada has existed as a threat and no more. In the brief inter-chapter opening Chapter VI of In Our Time, nada ceases to be a threat and becomes real when we learn that Nick has been wounded in the war. It is at this point that Hemingway's protagonist makes his ostensible break with social involvement. And this brief inter-chapter, the story of Krebs's social withdrawal in "Soldier's Home," and the well-known story "Big Two-Hearted River" are all of a piece in that they deal with the central psychic shock to Nick Adams and his manner of reacting to it. While this whole process is given a kind of re-documentation by Hemingway in A Farewell to Arms, the short stories do in fact trace the growing threat of nonbeing in Nick's psychic life, and his own gradually increasing consciousness of the need for, and the creation of, a protective ritual against it.

CHAPTER II

Means Of Defence

In the preceding chapter we have sought to clarify in a general way the manner in which the initial Hemingway protagonist undergoes a division in his being for the purpose of coming to terms with the threat of nonbeing. In this chapter we will concentrate upon the more fully elaborate means of defence developed by the Hemingway "tyro," and how successful they are in providing a sense of ontic security against impinging nada.

In the inter-chapter preceding Chapter VI of In Our Time, "Soldier's Home," and "Big Two-Hearted River," Hemingway relates the wounding of Nick Adams, his return home after the war, and his subsequent therapeutic fishing trip into the backwoods of Michigan. As we shall see, the means of defence become projected much more deliberately at this stage in the development of Nick's psychic life. In "Soldier's Home," Krebs returns home to his provincial town after the shock of his war wound to find himself an alien in a society which clings hypocritically to values which no longer have meaning. Societal and parental pressure to conform produce the opposite effect, and Krebs chooses to escape into an undefined future in Kansas City. The personality ambivalence in the "tyro" at this point is very much in evidence, however, in that we see a side of Krebs succumbing

to pressures from the established way of life as they are embodied in his mother. Krebs's mother, with her Puritanical zeal for work, her assurance, contrary to Krebs's own experience, that there are meaningful material goals to work towards, and her love, which she offers to him contingent upon his acceptance of these goals, serves as a spokesman for a meaningless bourgeois way of life which he simply cannot accept. His mother is concerned because Krebs has been unemployed for several months since his return from the war:

"God has some work for every one to do," his mother said. "There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom."¹

Krebs's reply, "I'm not in His Kingdom,"² is a cryptic rejection of the Puritan work ethic and the kind of God which it posits. His mother goes on to say that Krebs has been corrupted by the war:

"I've worried about you so much Harold," his mother went on. "I know the temptations you must have been exposed to. I know how weak men are. I know what your own dear grandfather, my own father, told us about the Civil War and I have prayed for you. I pray for you all day long, Harold."³

Krebs's response visually epitomizes his feeling about her attitude towards life as he merely focuses his attention on "the bacon fat hardening on his plate."⁴ His mother goes on to say that he has no ambition and he refuses to conform:

"Your father is worried, too," his mother went on. "He thinks you have lost your ambition, that you haven't got a definite aim in life. Charley Simmons, who is just your age, has a good job and is going to be married. The boys are all settling down; they're all determined to get somewhere; you can see that boys like Charley Simmons are on their way to being a credit to the community."⁵

Krebs resists this thoroughly meaningless advice to a point, but confronted with the contingent nature of his mother's love, he breaks down and agrees to do as she bids. But as Krebs himself says at the close of the story, "none of it had touched him. He had felt sorry for his mother and she had made him lie."⁶ A firm core of resistance at the center of Krebs, his inner self, cannot at this point be touched by the demands of external reality. A projected mask or false-self system has been created to achieve harmony in his relationships with others by complying to their demands:

"I'm your mother," she said. "I held you next to my heart when you were a tiny baby."

Krebs felt sick and vaguely nauseated.

"I know, Mummy," he said. "I'll try and be a good boy for you."⁷

The next story which we much approach, "Big Two-Hearted River," comes at the end of In Our Time and depicts the retreat of Nick Adams to a spot geographically outside of society. In this story the schizophrenic division of the protagonist is much more clearly defined than that which we saw manifested in the behavior of Krebs, which is to say that the psychic defence against impinging reality is much more consciously operative. But in this story, that impinging reality is the threat of nada, and hence, it is much more horrific than the societal pressures encountered by Krebs. In "Big Two-Hearted River" we see Nick Adams, now obviously a veteran returned from the war, travelling alone to the remote river

which bears the story's name. On one level this fishing trip appears to be nothing more than a pleasant interlude in an idyllic, pastoral environment. Even the astute literary critic Edmund Wilson misses the essence of the story in his comment that Nick is "alone [in] the woods: smoking, fishing, and eating, with no thought about anyone else or about anything [he] has ever done or will ever be obliged to do."⁸ In fact, "Big Two-Hearted River" deals with a war-ravaged mind, and is about a man who uses a fishing trip to hold back his memories of violence and death. Malcolm Cowley accurately describes this story as a kind of "waking dream,"⁹ but he does not realize that the response of Nick Adams is not confined to this story alone. Reality has become a nightmare for Nick Adams long before the outset of this story, and the response which we witness here is merely an intensification of a younger Nick's response to what were perhaps less severe psychic shocks. But unlike the stories depicting the younger Nick Adams, "Big Two-Hearted River" shows the acutely conscious protagonist here determinedly focusing his attention upon the objective phenomenal world in an effort to deaden his awareness of an all-pervading nada. His camp-making 'ceremonial' demonstrates this intensification of attention to minute detail:

Nick dropped his pack and rod-case and looked for a level piece of ground. He was very hungry and he wanted to make his camp before he cooked. Between two jack pines, the ground was quite level. He took the ax out of the pack and chopped out two projecting roots. That levelled a piece of ground large enough to sleep on. He smoothed out the sandy soil with his hand and pulled all the

sweet fern bushes by their roots. His hands smelled good from the sweet fern. He smoothed the uprooted earth. He did not want anything making lumps under the blankets. When he had the ground smooth, he spread his three blankets. One he folded double, next to the ground. The other two he spread on top.¹⁰

This ritualized behavior is not unlike the behavior of Freud's obsessional neurotic, the person who repeatedly and precisely performs a trivial act, which, while it is ostensibly meaningless in itself, does in fact vicariously fulfill an emotional demand of the personality. In his study "Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices," Freud shows how an entire personality may be structured around the minutiae associated with ceremonials or rituals:

The neurotic ceremonial consists of little prescriptions, performances, restrictions, and arrangements in certain activities of every-day life which have to be carried out always in the same or in a methodically varied way. These performances make the impression that they are mere "formalities", they appear quite meaningless to us. Nor do they appear otherwise to the patient himself; yet he is quite incapable of renouncing them, for every neglect of the ceremonial is punished with the most intolerable anxiety, which forces him to perform it instantly.¹¹

But contrary to the lack of self-awareness which characterizes Freud's obsessional neurotic, there is a full consciousness in the mind of the "tyro" as he matures, of the value and significance of the ceremonial which he performs. Nevertheless, the remarkable similarity between the obsessional neurotic and the "tyro" in the performance of the ceremonial of bed-making can be attested to by an additional comment from Freud's essay:

The carrying out of a ceremonial may be described as the fulfillment of a series of unwritten rules; for example, in the bed ceremonial the chair must stand in a particular place by the bed, and the clothes must be folded and laid upon it in a particular order; the coverlet must be tucked in at the bottom, and the bed-

clothes evenly spread; the pillows must be arranged in such and such a manner, and the body must lie in a particular position - - only when all is correct is it permissible to go to sleep. In slight cases the ceremonial appears to be only an exaggeration of an ordinary and justifiable orderliness, but the remarkable conscientiousness with which it is carried out, . . . gives the ceremonial the character of a sacred rite.¹²

We must note at this point, however, that the Hemingway protagonist's behavior in "Big Two-Hearted River" is no slight case which could qualify as merely a form of neurosis. While the protagonist does possess an obsessive and inordinate amount of anxiety, the total threat of impending annihilation with which he struggles has raised the nature of his condition dangerously close to functional psychosis, an intensification of the schizophrenic condition that we have been dealing with in the body of this study.

R. D. Laing points out that the schizophrenic's fear is characterized by a suffocating sense that the external world may collapse in upon him at any moment and destroy his individual identity. Laing has coined the term "implosion" to characterize this condition:

This is the strongest word I can find for the extreme form of what Winnicott terms the impingement of reality. Impingement does not convey, however, the full terror of the experience of the world as liable at any moment to crash in and obliterate all identity as a gas will rush in and obliterate a vacuum. The individual feels that, like the vacuum, he is empty. But this emptiness is him. Although in other ways he longs for the emptiness to be filled, he dreads the possibility of this happening because he has come to feel that all he can be is the awful nothingness of just this very vacuum. Any 'contact' with reality is then in itself experienced from this position, is necessarily implosive and thus, . . . in itself a threat to what identity the individual is able to suppose himself to have.¹³

Nick's response in "Big Two-Hearted River" to this threat of "implosion" is complex. In the first place, he follows the usual pattern of schizophrenic behavior in isolating himself from society. As Laing points out, "the main manoeuvre used to preserve identity under pressure from the dread of engulfment is isolation."¹⁴ Nick is here completing the retreat which Krebs was taking in his attempt to preserve his identity from his mother's demanding and identity-consuming 'love.' The landscape in "Big Two-Hearted River" is, in part, an objective correlative of this identity-negating relationship with others. In the course of his fishing trip, Nick climbs steadily upwards from the "burned-over" land in and around the deserted town of Seney, to the higher pine plains where he makes his camp, and gradually descends down the river to the very edge of the swamp. As in other works by Hemingway, particularly A Farewell to Arms and "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," references to high and low terrain clearly have a symbolic significance. The low ground suggested by the swamp and the burned over area around Seney, symbolizes an engulfing, restrictive threat to his personal freedom. Nick feels that the swamp would hinder his freedom to fish, that is, to live unencumbered by restraints:

It would not be possible to walk through a swamp like that. The branches grew so low. You would have to keep almost level with the ground to move at all. You could not crash through the branches.¹⁵

But at this stage in Nick's life, it is not merely restraint upon

his personal freedom but the total threat to his ontic reality as a person which concerns him. As in the short story "The Battler," the swamp which he has journeyed to suggests both the anarchy within his own being and the anarchy of external reality as he has recently experienced it in the war. Hence it is the threat of total dissolution which presents itself to him:

Nick did not want to go in there now. He felt a reaction against deep wading with the water deepening up under his arm-pits, to hook a big trout in places impossible to land them. In the swamp the banks were bare, the big cedars came together overhead, the sun did not come through, except in patches; in the fast deep water, in the half light, the fishing would be tragic. In the swamp fishing was a tragic adventure.¹⁶

The deepening water of the swamp takes on a menacing, a "tragic" aspect to Nick, who here manifests the usual schizophrenic concern with literally being engulfed by it. The danger of fire, perhaps, presents a similar hazard because of its consuming nature, and the burned-over countryside across which Nick has travelled on this fishing trip serves to heighten his ontological insecurity. Needless to say, the war experience is usually associated with fire. The images which suggest such engulfment are universal in their implications. Laing catalogs some of the more common images which menace the well-being of the schizophrenic in his fear of being engulfed:

There are many images used to describe related ways in which identity is threatened, which may be mentioned here, as closely related to the dread of engulfment, e.g. being buried, being drowned, being caught and dragged down into quicksand. The image of fire recurs repeatedly. Fire may be the uncertain flickering of the individual's own inner aliveness. It may be

a destructive alien power which will devastate him He will be engulfed by the fire or the water, and either way be destroyed.¹⁷

Hence we can see that in "Big Two-Hearted River" the description of the landscape, especially the fire-scorched ground and the swamp, objectively epitomizes the horror of nonbeing, the threat of engulfment which Nick Adams feels.

In "Big Two-Hearted River," then, we can see that the projected mask or false-self system is consciously and firmly held in place as a psychic barrier against the threat of nada. But in fact, this projected mask is in effect the sum total of an elaborate ritual; indeed the Nick Adams which we see here is the embodiment of this ritualistic response to nonbeing. At the centre of this uncertain chaos is the "good place," a small well-ordered area where small things done well help to divert Nick's consciousness away from the disorder which threatens to engulf him. This concentration upon order-seeking rituals must, however, be seen as an escape from past memories as well as from present fears. The high pine plain upon which Nick builds his camp, with its lack of undergrowth, and its vast open spaces flooded with light, is in marked contrast to the dark, suffocating atmosphere of the swamp:

Inside the tent the light came through the brown canvas. It smelled pleasantly of canvas. Already there was something mysterious and homelike. Nick was happy as he crawled inside the tent. He had not been unhappy all day. This was different though. Now things were done. There had been this to do. Now it was done. It had been a hard trip. He was very tired. That was done. He had made his camp. He was settled. Nothing could touch him. It was a good place to camp. He was there, in the

good place. He was in his home where he had made it.¹⁸

While he is in the "good place," the protagonist feels an abiding sense of security because he has here managed to create an order, however transitory, amid the total chaos both within and without.

Throughout Hemingway's fiction the fear of losing consciousness, that is, of losing the self, creates in the protagonist a need for a place which is secure against the threat of oblivion. In other stories than "Big Two-Hearted River," in which the protagonist is also an obvious victim of the war, whether he is still actively involved in it or not, this need is filled in a less tangible way. Though the threat of dissolution is still present in the story "Now I Lay Me," the protagonist, unlike Nick in "Big Two-Hearted River," has not managed to exhaust himself to the point where he can avoid thinking about nada by simply falling asleep. Nor has he managed to construct an ordered environment. Instead, his means of therapy here consist of recollections of his enjoyable experiences in the past:

I had different ways of occupying myself while I lay awake. I would think of a trout stream I had fished along when I was a boy and fish its whole length very carefully in my mind; fishing very carefully under all the logs, all the turns of the bank, the deep holes and the clear shallow stretches, sometimes catching trout and sometimes losing them.¹⁹

Significantly, the recollection he does have, while it is a fishing experience similar in its studied, ritualistic attention to detail to the fishing journey in "Big Two-Hearted River," is, in

fact, a recollection of a fishing expedition of his childhood when he still possessed the innocence and psychic wholeness he so desperately wants to regain. Now Nick Adams can only sleep in daylight or in a room which is artificially lighted. As in the case of Frederic Henry, this is his defence against nada. "If I could have a light," Nick says, "I was not afraid to sleep, because I knew my soul would only go out of me if it were dark."²⁰

In another brief war sketch, "A Way You'll Never Be," we see Nick Adams even closer to total psychic collapse. As we see him wandering about the front lines in an American military uniform to encourage the Italian soldiers to think that he is only an advance member of a larger American military contingent coming to assist them shortly, we sense that an excess of violence has completely demolished his defences, and he now has only moments of sanity. But the character of the imagery which Nick here uses in one of his diatribes about forthcoming military help is significant:

"I am demonstrating the American uniform," Nick said. "Don't you think it is very significant? It is a little tight in the collar but soon you will see untold millions wearing this uniform swarming like locusts. The grasshopper, you know, what we call the grasshopper in America, is really a locust. The true grasshopper is small and green and comparatively feeble. You must not, however, make a confusion with the seven-year locust or cicada which emits a peculiar sustained sound which at the moment I cannot recall. I try to recall it but I cannot. I can almost hear it and then it is quite gone. You will pardon me if I break off our conversation?"

Not only does this passage demonstrate that Nick is now a complete psychic cripple, but the image of the grasshopper calls to mind the fire-blackened locusts which Nick sees on his fishing trip in "Big Two-Hearted River." Here the intense concentration upon the insect, and his identification of it with the war, is suggestive of Nick's consuming concern with the all-engulfing nature of nada. The traditional identification of this insect with destruction only adds to the effectiveness of its use at this particular point. At this time in his life, Nick is without much of the elaborate ritual he has developed when we see him in "Big Two-Hearted River," and all that he has is the light which he almost desperately clings to in the night as a meagre protection against the total chaos of darkness. This is made explicit in his response to the friendly Italian captain's concern for his well-being:

"I'm fine. I'm perfectly all right."

"No. I mean really."

"I'm all right. I can't sleep without a light of some sort. That's all I have now."²²

And even the sleep that Nick does have is haunted with inexplicable images out of his past:

He never dreamed about the front now any more but what frightened him so that he could not get rid of it was the long yellow house and the different width of the river. Now he was back here at the river, he had gone through that same town, and there was no house. Nor was the river that way. Then where did he go each night and what was the peril, and why would he wake, soaking wet, more frightened than he had ever been in a bombardment, because of a house and a long stable and a canal?²³

Nick's ritualized pattern of behavior, the mask or false-self system, has been battered so forcibly by the threat of imminent dissolution that, in this story, we catch frequent glimpses of his real or inner self.

Another story which deals with the random slaughter of war is the enigmatic little piece entitled "A Natural History Of The Dead." In this brief work, which was originally published in Death In The Afternoon and later transferred to Hemingway's volume of short stories, Winner Take Nothing, Hemingway sets as his ostensible purpose, an objective analysis of death from the perspective of the naturalist. The brief sketch opens with an account of the great humanist Mungo Park who, while travelling through the desert on one of his journeys, is so fatigued and thirsty that he prepares to accept his death. While in this exhausted condition, however, he notices a tiny flower blooming on the desert and he is inspired to greater effort by the sight. "Can that Being who planted, watered and brought to perfection, in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern upon the situation and suffering of creatures formed after his own image?"²⁴ After meditating thus for a moment he trudges onward, oblivious to his immediate needs, and finally reaches safety. But divine providence has never smiled fondly on Hemingway or his fictional counterparts, and with a satiric bitterness Hemingway virtually demolishes Mungo Park's easy optimism. Calling upon his vivid memories

of death as he witnessed it himself during the war, he gives us the full force of the irrational and ugly intrusion of violence and death into human life:

The first thing that you found about the dead was that, hit badly enough, they died like animals. Some quickly from a little wound you would not think would kill a rabbit. They died from little wounds as rabbits die sometimes from three or four small grains of shot that hardly seem to break the skin. Others would die like cats; a skull broken in and iron in the brain, they lie alive two days like cats that crawl into the coal bin with a bullet in the brain and will not die until you cut their heads off. Maybe cats do not die then, they say they have nine lives, I do not know, but most men die like animals, not men.²⁵

And if Hemingway's description of men receiving death does not completely overcome us with a sense of the horrific, his description of death surely does:

Until the dead are buried they change somewhat in appearance each day. The color change in Caucasian races is from white to yellow, to yellow-green, to black. If left long enough in the heat the flesh comes to resemble coal-tar, especially where it has been broken or torn, and it has quite a visible tarlike iridescence. The dead grow larger each day until sometimes they become quite too big for their uniforms, filling these until they seem blown tight enough to burst. The individual members may increase in girth to an unbelievable extent and faces fill as taut and globular as balloons. The surprising thing, next to their progressive corpulence, is the amount of paper that is scattered about the dead. Their ultimate position, before there is any question of burial, depends on the location of the pockets in the uniform The heat, the flies, the indicative positions of the bodies in the grass, and the amount of paper scattered are the impressions one retains.²⁶

Hemingway, always the master of understatement, then coolly observes that he could not recall the odor of death although he knew it was there, and likens it to the recollection of a past love affair wherein you are able to picture the various incidents, but

are not able to remember the sensations that went with them. And perhaps it is Hemingway's apparent emotional indifference to the very disturbing subject matter which provides the cogent impact of this work. Written more in the manner of an objective article than a short story, and hence lacking the Nick Adams persona or any other central character as such, this work is nonetheless significant, much more perhaps for what the ostensible objectivity seeks to conceal than what the narrative actually reveals. For in this case, the mask or false-self emerges as the author's coolly 'naturalistic' writing style. To put it another way, Hemingway's intense emotional involvement with the imagery of his own memory is here partly obscured by an aura of objectivity, which we sense to be little more than a protective facade concealing the writer's disturbed sensibility upon discovering the horror of man's brutality. "One wonders," writes Hemingway, "what the perservering traveller, Mungo Park, would have seen on a battlefield in hot weather to restore his confidence."²⁷ It is this kind of telling, bitter comment which brings us to realize that, while this sketch may lack the protagonist who projects the ritual mask or false-self, the duality of personality which characterizes the short stories we have thus far examined is present here as well although in a somewhat altered form. The cracks in Nick Adams' protective mask, the light that he sleeps with at night or the overly-elaborate ritual

which he practices by day, correspond to the bitter but genuine comments of the author, his own failure to 'hold tight' in his attempt at an objective observation of death.

Before moving on to examine other short stories relevant to our study, we should look briefly at the short story within the story "A Natural History of the Dead." In this narrative there is an account of a man whose head has been smashed in by shell fire, "as a flower-pot may be broken, although it was all held together by membranes and a skillfully applied bandage."²⁸ Given up for dead and hence removed by stretcher-bearers to a cave where the other dead were put, this man nonetheless continues to breathe on much to the unease of the stretcher-bearers who hear his breathing upon each of their return trips to the cave. In an ensuing debate between an artillery officer, who wants to humanely shoot the wounded man, and a doctor in charge of the medical station, who refuses to permit the wounded man to be removed from the cave of the dead, Hemingway skillfully weaves together at this point the identification of death and nothing or nothingness. In the sudden, violent altercation between the doctor and the officer, the doctor temporarily blinds the officer by throwing a saucer full of iodine into his eyes and then removes his gun. Into the center of this absurd disagreement over the value of human life enters one of the stretcher-bearers with the news that the man with the smashed head has

expired. The doctor's response to this information reveals Hemingway's deliberately ambiguous use of the word "nothing:"

"See, my poor lieutenant? We dispute about nothing. In time of war we dispute about nothing."

"F--- you," said the lieutenant of artillery. He still could not see. "You've blinded me."

"It is nothing," said the doctor. "Your eyes will be all right. It is nothing. A dispute about nothing."²⁹

Death, the explicit topic of their conversation, is here given a much broader reference, the ominous threat of non-being that characterizes much of Hemingway's fiction. And the final response of the doctor to the screams of the artillery officer provides us with an illuminating insight into the Hemingway character's response to a world pervaded by meaningless suffering:

"Hold him tight," said the doctor. "He is in much pain. Hold him very tight."³⁰

The necessity to be held tight, either by oneself or others, in the face of intense pain, corresponds with the elaborate rituals which constitute such a vital part of the Hemingway protagonist as we have examined him thus far.

"In Another Country" is a short story which offers us a superb illustration of the Hemingway protagonist whose projected mask or false-self system has been battered so forcefully by the events in his life that his real or inner self is revealed briefly to the reader. But whereas Nick Adams was totally absent from the short story "A Natural History of the Dead", he

is present in this story in a subsidiary role. The central character in the story, an Italian major whose one hand has been badly mutilated by a war wound, spends his days at a treatment center attempting to teach Italian grammar to Nick Adams, who has suffered his famous leg wound. Both men are undergoing mechanical therapy and the major, Italy's finest fencer before the war, comes to the center every day as a guinea pig for the new machines, although he personally has no faith in their rehabilitative power. During this period of treatment the major's wife, who is both young and in apparent good health, dies suddenly. We can witness the momentary disintegration of the major's stern forbearance under the onslaught of the irrational in his bitter conversation with Nick, who is at this point unaware of the death of the major's wife:

"What will you do when the war is over if it is over?" he asked me. "Speak grammatically!"

"I will go to the States."

"Are you married?"

"No, but I hope to be."

"The more of a fool you are," he said. He seemed very angry. "A man must not marry."

"Why Signor Maggiore?"

"Don't call me 'Signor Maggiore.'"

"Why must not a man marry?"

"He cannot marry. He cannot marry," he said angrily. "If he is to lose everything, he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose." He spoke very angrily and bitterly, and looked straight ahead while he talked. "But why should he necessarily lose it?"

"He'll lose it," the major said. He was looking at the wall. Then he looked down at the machine and jerked his little hand out from between the straps and slapped it hard against his thigh. "He'll lose it," he almost shouted. "Don't argue with me!"³¹

Struck by the immense contingency of life, by the imminence of nada or nonbeing objectified in the meaningless death of his wife, and to a lesser extent, perhaps, by the loss of the use of his hand, the external personality with which he usually confronts the world collapses. Even after telling Nick Adams the reason for his rude behavior the major reveals to Nick, and to us as readers, the genuine or inner self:

He [the major] stood there biting his lower lip. "It is very difficult," he said. "I cannot resign myself."

He looked straight past me and out through the window. Then he began to cry. "I am utterly unable to resign myself," he said and choked.³²

But the glimpse of this real self lasts but an instant. The major promptly catches himself and, "carrying himself straight and soldierly, with tears on both cheeks and biting his lips,"³³ he walks out with his protective mask almost in place. To peer deeply and steadily into the abyss of nonbeing without blinking is as impossible for Hemingway's major in this story as it is for Nick Adams or the other fictional characters in his works whose lives are touched by the reality of nada.

Like "In Another Country," Hemingway's short story "A Pursuit Race" was first published in 1928 in a volume of short stories entitled Men Without Women. And like "In Another Country" and "A Natural History Of The Dead," this story is largely concerned with the nature of the mask or false-self system which the focal character (or the narrator in "A Natural History Of the Dead"), uses to confront the world. In each of

these stories we are briefly witness to the collapse of this protective structure due to the respective character's inability to continually confront the abyss of death and nothingness. Struck momentarily by the awareness of the utter meaninglessness of all human existence, they are overcome by an overwhelming sense of ontological insecurity. As the mask slips, we have a fleeting glimpse of the horror-haunted face behind it.

In "A Pursuit Race," Hemingway uses the French cycle race as a metaphor for life. In such a race, cyclists start the race at different time intervals, and whenever one cyclist overtakes another one, the one overtaken is immediately disqualified and must remove himself from the race. Hence each cyclist must ride as though he has a "wolf" forever at his back. The central character, William Campbell, is employed as an advance man for a burlesque show travelling across the United States, and is only paid so long as he remains ahead of the show. But he is finally overcome by an utter sense of meaninglessness, and his employer, who is nick-named Sliding Billy Turner, finds Campbell in a bed in a cheap hotel in Kansas City, attempting to live with an awareness of the human condition as he sees it by the use of alcohol and other drugs. Mr. Turner assumes that William Campbell is simply drunk:

"How long have you been stewed, Billy?"

"Haven't I done my work?"

"Sure. I just asked you how long you've been stewed, Billy."

"I don't know. But I've got my wolf back," he touched the sheet with his tongue. "I've had him for a week."

"The hell you have."

"Oh, yes. My dear wolf. Every time I take a drink he goes outside the room. He can't stand alcohol. The poor little fellow." He moved his tongue round and round on the sheet. "He's a lovely wolf. He's just like he always was." William Campbell shut his eyes and took a deep breath.³⁴

But even after being informed that William Campbell is now taking drugs, Mr. Turner seems unaware of the source of William Campbell's problem and is confident that, as with alcoholics, there is a cure for drug users:

"That's the new development [the use of drugs]," William Campbell said. "I drink a little now once in a while, just to drive the wolf out of the room."

"They got a cure for that," "Sliding Billy" Turner said.

"No," William Campbell said. "They haven't got a cure for anything."³⁵

For William Campbell to live with the "wolf," the ever-lurking threat of nada, requires all of the fortification that such temporary palliatives as alcohol and drugs can provide. In fact, however, he realizes that these temporary palliatives are just that; he has run his "pursuit race" and has been caught and so must now grapple with his pursuer. And the nick-name of his employer, "Sliding Billy," suggest that he, Mr. Turner, has an innate ability to come to terms with, or adjust to the conditions of life, an ability which William Campbell does not have:

"Listen, Billy," William Campbell said, "I want to tell you something. You're called 'Sliding Billy.' That's because you can slide. I'm called just Billy. That's because I never could slide at all. I can't slide, Billy. I can't slide. It just catches. Every time I try it, it catches." He shut his eyes. "I can't slide, Billy. It's awful when you can't slide."³⁶

To suggest as we have that William Campbell is, at this point in his life, overcome with ontological insecurity must be qualified by stressing that what he now undergoes is only an intensification of an ontic anxiety firmly rooted at the core of his being. As his inability to "slide" suggests, William Campbell has never had a firm sense of his own self as a very valid or genuine entity. But this deep-rooted dread of the ontic contingency of life has, until now, been at least partially concealed by a mask of assumed ontological security which simply is not present within his personality. Hemingway, in this story, has skilfully captured the very moment in the life of his protagonist when the mask of ontological security has been shorn from him, and he is revealed naked and without capacity for further accommodation to the reality of ontic contingency.

One of the most potent short stories which deals with the psychic nightmare is entitled "The Gambler, The Nun, And The Radio." This story, which is given a post-war setting, appeared in Hemingway's volume of short stories Winner Take Nothing, but was initially published in Scribner's Magazine in 1933 under the somewhat blatant title of "Give Us A Prescription, Doctor." The story deals with a period of hospitalization in the life of a Hemingway character named Frazer, a writer who is suffering considerably from a badly smashed leg. As in earlier short stories, such as "The Killers," Hemingway

skilfully juxtaposes several characters in their particular responses to the exigencies of life. The three most important characters, as the title indicates, are a gambler, a nun, and the writer Frazer, who is identified with the radio. The gambler, Cayetano, who has been shot for cheating at cards, views life with a stoic forbearance. Ontologically secure, he accepts the attempt on his life with a kind of gay optimism summed up in Sister Cecilia's observation: "He was such a fine patient. He always smiled."³⁷ Furthermore, the fact that he cheats at gambling indicates that he willingly participates in the evil of the world, a compromise which he deems necessary for his own well-being. Not unlike Cayetano, Sister Cecilia is secure in her own being. However, her optimism is based upon a myopic refusal to really accept the human condition. Her negation of the power of the human will in life, and her total reliance upon God, are raised to the level of the absurd in one of the few great comic passages in the short stories:

"The world series nearly finished me. When the Athletics were at bat I was praying right out loud: 'Oh, Lord, direct their batting eyes! 'Oh, Lord, may he hit one! Oh, Lord, may he hit safely!' Then when they filled the bases in the third game, you remember, it was too much for me. 'Oh, Lord, may he hit it out of the lot! Oh, Lord, may he drive it clean over the fence!' Then you know when the Cardinals would come to bat it was simply dreadful. 'Oh, Lord, may they not see it! Oh, Lord, don't let them even catch a glimpse of it! Oh, Lord, may they fan!'"³⁸

In reducing the game of baseball to a puppet show Sister Cecilia negates human will and responsibility.

Mr. Frazer, the character of central importance in "The Gambler, The Nun, And The Radio," is obviously a fictional counterpart of Nick Adams. Like Cayetano, and unlike Sister Cecilia, he accepts the contingent nature of reality, yet he lacks a firm sense of the validity of his own being and hence, like Nick in the earlier short stories, must grapple more directly with nada. For him nonbeing almost becomes personified as an objective reality which must be rendered harmless through an elaborate ritual. Like the Nick Adams of "A Way You'll Never Be," Mr. Frazer fears the night which, in Hemingway's fiction, suggests the ultimate threat of chaos and dissolution. The focal point of his ritualistic defence in the hours of darkness is his radio, which assures him that his soul, or consciousness, will not lose contact with an experiential world of timebound reality:

In that hospital a radio did not work very well until it was dusk. They said it was because there was so much ore in the ground or something about the mountains, but anyway it did not work well at all until it began to get dark outside; but all night it worked beautifully and when one station stopped you could go further west and pick up another. The last one that you could get was Seattle, Washington, and due to the difference in time, when they signed off at four o'clock in the morning it was five o'clock in the morning in the hospital; and at six o'clock you could get the morning revellers in Minneapolis.³⁹

In the constant repetition of this ritual a measure of security is achieved, because familiarity gives Mr. Frazer a firmer sense of his own being. The view from his window "acquires a great value"⁴⁰ as well, because the landscape, examined frequently and

minutely, provides a sense of permanence or stability for a personality oversensitive to its own transience. And like the landscape outside his window, the radio programmes and the cities they emanate from constitute a visual experience, an experience which he not only listens to but actively participates in:

Mr. Frazer used to like to think of the morning revellers arriving at the studio and picture how they would look getting off a street car before daylight in the morning carrying their instruments. . . . He had never been in Minneapolis and believed he probably would never go there, but he knew what it looked like that early in the morning.⁴¹

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Seattle he came to know very well, the taxicab company with the big white cabs (each cab equipped with radio itself) he rode in every night out to the roadhouse on the Canadian side where he followed the course of parties by the musical selections they phoned for. He lived in Seattle from two o'clock on, each night, hearing the pieces that all the different people asked for, and it was as real as Minneapolis, where the revellers left their beds each morning to make that trip down to the studio. Mr. Frazer grew very fond of Seattle, Washington.⁴²

The emphasis upon ritual in this story serves to amplify and broaden the general meaning of the ritualistic response characteristic of so much of Hemingway's fiction. Ritual is, in effect, a kind of drug or "opium" to make humanity less sensitive to pain and evil in the world. And there is a countless number of opiates available:

Religion is the opium of the people Yes, and music is the opium of the people; along with patriotism the opium of the people in Italy and Germany. What about sexual intercourse; was that an opium of the people? Of some of the people. Of some of the best of the people. But drink was a sovereign opium of the people, oh, an excellent opium. Although some prefer the radio, another opium of the people, a cheap one he had just been using. Along with these went gambling, an opium of the people if there

ever was one, one of the oldest. Ambition was another, an opium of the people, along with a belief in any new form of government But what was the real one? What was the real, the actual, opium of the people? . . . Of course; bread was the opium of the people.⁴³

Needless to say, the gambler and the nun have their place on the list in the categories of gambling and religion.

If there is a note of bitterness in Hemingway's catalogue of pain-killing opiates we must attribute it to the author's tremendous sensitivity to nonbeing and his feeling that no possible response will prove totally effectual. Religion is perhaps the ultimate attempt to come to terms with meaninglessness and non-being which pervade our western sensibility. However, as we shall see, Hemingway, in his story "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," rejects the fundamental tenets of Western Christendom. Although we do not see Nick Adams in this story, the old man, who has once attempted suicide and who comes nightly to the well-lit and orderly atmosphere of the cafe, manifests the same fear of nada that Nick does. His nightly visits to the cafe, together with deliberate bouts of drinking leading to inebriation, constitute a prescribed ritual to allay the threat of nonbeing. And in this story, as in no other, Hemingway actually names the source of the threat:

What did he fear? It was not fear or dread. It was a nothing that he knew too well. It was all a nothing and a man was nothing too.⁴⁴

But, as the contrasting attitudes of the two waiters would indicate, not everyone is conscious of this presence. The younger

waiter, with his "youth and confidence", is out of sympathy with the old man's dilemma:

"I don't want to look at him. I wish he would go home. He has no regard for those who must work."⁴⁵

However the older waiter, who shares the common experience of insomnia and anxiety, is empathetic:

"I am of those who like to stay late at the cafe," the older waiter said. "With all those who do not want to go to bed. With all those who need a light for the night."⁴⁶

And after the younger waiter leaves for the night, the older waiter is reluctant to leave himself because it is the light and order of the cafe which affirms his own being. Again, as in earlier short stories, light and order become important factors in maintaining psychic stability. We can equate the cafe with Nick Adams' "good place" in "Big Two-Hearted River." And the "good place" or "clean, well-lighted" cafe is all that the Hemingway protagonist can find in a world where religious certainty no longer provides a bulwark to a threat to his being. The central core of irony in Hemingway's fiction is that ceremonies and rituals are not used to invoke a beneficent presence. This is powerfully enunciated in his famous parody of the Lord's Prayer in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place":

Some lived in it and never felt it but he knew it all was nada y pues nada y nada y pues nada. Our nada who art in nada, nada be thy name thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada. Hail nothing full of nothing, nothing is with thee.⁴⁷

Ironically, then, Hemingway's 'religion', while it seems to presuppose an all-pervasive presence beyond the self, actually only manifests an extreme concern with nonbeing, which, despite Western rational positivism's philosophical claims to the contrary, the author paradoxically maintains is completely real. And the rituals, which in any religion give meaning and purpose to life, are used in Hemingway's world as only a temporary defence against meaninglessness.

CONCLUSION

The first thing an Italian soldier [in the Italian-Ethiopian conflict] should be told is to roll over on his face if he is hit and cannot keep moving. There is a man alive today who did not know that rule during the fighting of the last war in German East Africa. While he was unconscious the vultures got his eyes and he woke in the stabbing blinding pain with the stinking, feathered shuffle over him, and, beating at them, rolled onto his face in time to save half of it. . . . If you ever want to see how long it takes them to come to a live man lie down under a tree, perfectly still, and watch them, first circling so high they look as small as specks, then coming, dropping in concentric circles, then plummeting down in a whish of rushing wings to deal with you. You sit up and the ring jumps back raising their wings. But what about if you could not sit up?

From "Wings Always Over Africa."¹

In Hemingway's fiction, while survival is ultimately beyond the control of the human will, it is nevertheless the human will which must seek to construct a meaningful pattern of action to come to terms with a universe which is essentially meaningless. In this universe, nada, the threat of nonbeing, is an ever-present, all-consuming menace waiting to devour our human identity. And for Hemingway the solution, however inadequate it may ultimately prove to be, is a kind of turning away from the harsh and uncompromising nature of reality; it is a retreat into a persona, a ritual mask which insulates the protagonist so that sanity can prevail.

In speaking of Hemingway's "religious vision," we must observe, then, that it is a vision advocating evasion rather than confrontation. But lest we too quickly judge Hemingway for a

failure in courage, the courage to be, we should realize that if he evades rather than confronts the gods of his world, it is because they are totally malevolent. Jung points out in his book Psychology and Religion that for man the gods have always been at least in part malevolent, in part gods of retribution. Jung elaborates on the ritualistic methods which man has employed in his effort to come to terms with these forces in his universe.

Since the dawn of mankind there has been a marked tendency to delimit the unruly and arbitrary "supernatural" influence by definite forms and laws. And this process has gone on in history by the multiplication of rites, institutions and creeds. In the last two thousand years we find the institution of the Christian Church assuming a mediating and protective function between these influences and man.²

Of course, in the Christian church, the various rites and ceremonies demonstrate a desire to approach this Deity despite his ambivalent nature. For Hemingway, however, the rites and ceremonies are wholly an attempt to construct a world free of supernatural influence.

But if the works which we have examined in this study show a total preoccupation with nada, a persistent ontological insecurity at the very heart of the Hemingway protagonist, from Nick Adams in "Indian Camp" to the old man in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," a more comprehensive study of the whole body of Hemingway's fiction might offer some room for optimism. Although much of the fiction which followed the publication of A Farewell to Arms is ostensibly pessimistic in character, nonetheless, the

threat ceases to emanate from the abstract horror of nada, and becomes focused upon a more concrete external reality, a concern with dying. Both Robert Jordan in For Whom The Bell Tolls and Colonel Cantwell in Across The River and Into The Trees manifest a concern for concrete violence rather than abstract anxiety. Whether, as Philip Young argues,³ Colonel Cantwell's bodily purgation on the spot where all of the Hemingway protagonists received their climactic wound was necessary before psychic wholeness or ontological security could be recovered, is beyond the province of this study. But Santiago in The Old Man And the Sea, fishing on the sea, the ultimate symbol of dissolution, serves to remind us, that in Hemingway's total vision, psychic wholeness may be a possibility which man can achieve if he but has the courage to persevere.

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

¹"Anna Karenina", The Opposing Self, 66-75.

²Ibid., 71.

³"The Poet as Hero: Keats in His Letters", The Opposing Self, 38-39.

⁴The Territory Ahead, 136.

⁵"Hemingway and the Pale Cast of Thought", American Literature, XXXVIII (March, 1966-January, 1967), 164.

⁶"Hemingway: Gauge of Morale", The Wound and the Bow, 185.

⁷"Hemingway and the Pale Cast of Thought", 165.

⁸The Escape Motif in the Works of Ernest Hemingway, 119.

⁹The Sun Also Rises, 148.

¹⁰Modern Man In Search Of A Soul, 205.

¹¹The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway, (Scribner's Edition), 139. All subsequent references to Hemingway's short stories will be taken from this edition.

¹²The Courage To Be, 36-37.

¹³See R. D. Laing, The Divided Self, 39 ff.

¹⁴"Hemingway: Gauge of Morale", 196.

¹⁵"Hemingway: The Etiquette of the Berserk", In Search of Heresy, 150.

¹⁶Ibid., 150.

¹⁷Ibid., 165.

¹⁸Wyndham Lewis, "Ernest Hemingway: The 'Dumb Ox'", A Soldier of Humor and Selected Writings, 273. Hemingway, says Lewis, "is interested in the sports of death, in the sad things that happen to those engaged in the sports of love--in sand sharks and in Wilson

spoons--in wars, but not in the things that cause wars, or the people who profit by it, or in the ultimate human destinies involved in it. He lives, or affects to live submerged. He is in the multitudinous ranks of those to whom things happen--terrible things of course, and, of course, stoically borne. . . . It is not perhaps necessary to say that Hemingway's art is an art of the surface."

¹⁹Malcolm Cowley, "Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway", Hemingway: A Collection of Critical Essays, 40.

²⁰The Twenties, 88-89.

²¹Ibid., 89.

²²Ibid., 90.

²³Ibid., 94.

²⁴Ernest Hemingway, 12.

²⁵Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 80.

²⁶Ibid., 63.

²⁷A term coined by Young. See Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 55 ff.

²⁸"Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway", 48.

²⁹Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 79-80.

³⁰"Hemingway: The Etiquette of the Berserk", 155.

³¹Psychology and Religion, 19-20.

³²"Hemingway: The Etiquette of the Berserk", 155.

³³The Escape Motif in the Works of Ernest Hemingway, 118-119.

Chapter I

¹Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 30.

²"On the Quay at Smyrna", 88.

³"Indian Camp", 92.

⁴Ibid., 94.

⁵Ibid., 95.

⁶"The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife", 102.

⁷"The Three-Day Blow", 122.

⁸Ibid., 124-125.

⁹Ibid., 121.

¹⁰Ibid., 123.

¹¹Ibid., 123.

¹²Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 63-64.

¹³For complete discussion of this see Earl Rovits' Ernest Hemingway.

¹⁴The Divided Self, 41-42.

¹⁵Ibid., 42.

¹⁶Ibid., 94-95.

¹⁷Ibid., 99.

¹⁸"Indian Camp", 95.

¹⁹"The Battler", 135.

²⁰ Ibid., 136.

²¹"The Killers", 289.

²²Ibid., 287-288.

²³Ibid., 288.

²⁴Ibid., 289.

²⁵Ibid., 288.

²⁶Ibid., 289.

Chapter II

¹"Soldier's Home", 151.

²Ibid., 151.

³Ibid., 151.

⁴Ibid., 151.

⁵Ibid., 151.

⁶Ibid., 152-153.

⁷Ibid., 152.

⁸"Hemingway: Guage of Morale", 177.

⁹"Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway", 42.

¹⁰"Big Two-Hearted River: Part I", 214.

¹¹"Obsessive Acts and Religious Practices", Sigmund Freud: Collected Papers, 26.

¹²Ibid., 26.

¹³The Divided Self, 45-46.

¹⁴Ibid., 44.

¹⁵"Big Two-Hearted River: Part II", 231.

¹⁶Ibid., 231.

¹⁷The Divided Self, 45.

¹⁸"Big Two-Hearted River: Part I", 215.

¹⁹"Now I Lay Me", 363.

²⁰Ibid., 367.

²¹"A Way You'll Never Be", 410-411.

²²Ibid., 407.

²³Ibid., 409.

²⁴"A Natural History of the Dead", 440.

²⁵Ibid., 444.

²⁶Ibid., 443.

²⁷Ibid., 444.

²⁸Ibid., 446.

²⁹Ibid. 449.

³⁰Ibid., 449.

³¹"In Another Country", 271.

³²Ibid., 272.

³³Ibid., 272.

³⁴"A Pursuit Race", 352.

³⁵Ibid., 353.

³⁶Ibid., 353-354.

³⁷"The Gambler, The Nun, And The Radio", 471.

³⁸Ibid., 474.

³⁹Ibid., 472.

⁴⁰Ibid., 473.

⁴¹Ibid., 472.

⁴²Ibid., 479-480.

⁴³Ibid., 485-486.

⁴⁴"A Clean, Well-Lighted Place", 382-383.

⁴⁵Ibid., 381.

⁴⁶Ibid., 382.

⁴⁷Ibid., 383.

Conclusion

¹"Wings Always Over Africa", By-Line: Ernest Hemingway, 231.

²Psychology and Religion, 21-22.

³See Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration, 120.

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